

## Policy briefing: T levels

This briefing is provided for employers, educators, students, parents and other interested parties.

### What are T levels?

- 2-year, level 3 educational programmes designed with employers in mind
- developed collaboratively by the Department for Education (DfE), Institute for Apprenticeships (IfA), education providers and employers
- aimed to provide learners with routes into technical occupations, and to simplify the post-16 technical education system
- a classroom-based alternative to level 3 apprenticeships, designed to the same standards, and aiming to provide learners with a 'threshold competence' – as close to occupational competence as can be reasonably expected after two years of study in a provider based setting
- programmes that may lead to a range of further options:
  - skilled occupation
  - higher or degree level apprenticeships
  - higher level technical education (including higher education).

### What is the significance to the chemical sector?

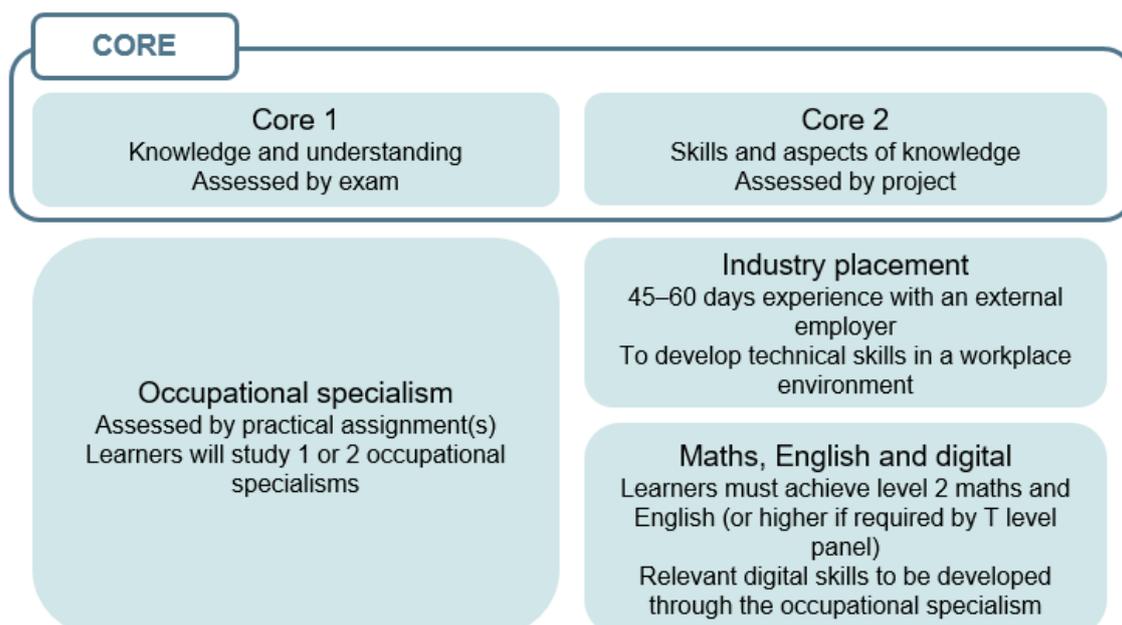
T levels are being designed for 11 occupational pathways, some of which contain multiple T level routes. The most relevant to our sector is the Science T level, which sits within the Health and Science pathway. Within the Science T levels, students will be able to follow specialisms that develop the skills for laboratory technician, animal technologist, food technologist or metrology technician.

### Timeline

- Roll-out of T levels will be phased; a small number of pathways will begin in September 2020, with remaining routes launching in 2021–2023.
- All Health and Science routes will begin delivery in September 2021.
- A consultation on the content for Health and Science is due in December 2018.

### How are the programmes structured?

The T level programme covers the following components:



- A full T level programme will comprise around 1800 learning hours.
- The Core is common to all learners taking a given route; all students studying the Science T level will follow the same Core.
- The Core and Occupational specialism together form the Technical Qualification. Technical Qualifications will be designed and delivered by Awarding Organisations (AOs), and regulated by Ofqual.
- Individual education providers will decide how to structure the T level courses they offer.
- Providers are responsible for finding industry placement opportunities for students with local employers.
- Different models for the industry placements are being piloted to see what works best for specific industries and providers. The placement could be a continuous block of working days, a part-time arrangement alongside classroom study, or distributed across the study programme. The DfE will confirm how placements should be delivered once the pilots have been completed.
- Students must achieve a minimum of level 2 English and maths by the time they complete the T level programme. If they have not yet achieved level 2 when they begin the T level, they will be funded for the additional study time to fulfil this requirement as part of the T level.
- A student must pass all aspects of the Technical Qualification, complete the industry placement, and fulfil the maths and English requirements to pass the full T level programme and receive a certificate. A student who does not complete all components of the T level, but does complete some, will receive a statement of achievement.

## Assessment and grading

- AOs will design the assessments within the regulations set by the DfE and Ofqual. AOs may decide at what time of year assessments will take place, and whether there will be one or two assessment opportunities each year for the Core and Occupational Specialism assessments. So, these arrangements may differ between T levels.
- All assessments for the Core must be taken in the same assessment series, as must all assessments for the Occupational Specialism (this may be a different series to the Core). If a student re-sits either the Core or the Occupational Specialism, they must take all assessments for that component again.
- Students who achieve all required components of a T level receive an overall Pass grade. The DfE is exploring whether and how higher overall grades could be awarded.
- The Core is graded on an A\*–E scale. Students receive one grade, encompassing performance on both components of the Core.
- The Occupational specialism is graded Pass/Merit/Distinction.
- There is no grade for the Industry placement, but it must be completed.
- The grade for maths and English will depend on the qualification the student takes. For example, if the student fulfils the requirement through GCSE maths and English, they will receive a grade on the 9–4 scale.
- Grades will be listed on the T level certificate or statement of achievement.

## More information?

Read the Government policy paper on the [Introduction of T levels](#) for more detail.

If you'd like to know more our policy work related to T levels, please contact the Education Policy team: [EducationPolicy@rsc.org](mailto:EducationPolicy@rsc.org)